

January 2014

# THE FAITHFUL BELL

St. Francis Episcopal Church



## STAFF

The Rev. Conor Alexander, *Rector*  
Janice Black, *Secretary*  
Bennett Card, *Christian Formation*  
John Ickes, *Music Director*  
Roland Nave, *Accompanist*  
Brett Iwejor, *Nursery Attendant*

## Vestry

Orlando Smith, *Senior Warden*  
Chris Anderson, *Junior Warden*  
Lynn Kennedy, *Registrar*  
Roxanne Taylor, *Treasurer*  
Dosh Jackson, *Finance*  
Ken Clarke, *Stewardship*  
Susan Clever, *Social*  
Robert Savage, *Communications*  
Ron Simmons, *Christian Formation*  
Barbera Radford, *Outreach*  
Suzanne Yatsko, *Evangelism*

## Parish Ministry Leaders

Tsu Fullwood, *Altar Guild*  
Jackie Clarke, *Acolytes*  
Maureen Fuster, *ECW*  
Erika Grasse, *EYC*  
Sarah Owens, *Lay Readers*  
Bob Fullwood, *Men's Group*  
Ken Clarke, *Ushers*

Dear Friends in Christ,

One of the things that struck me recently was how wordy theology can be. Some of us have studied it so much that we don't realize when our words are lost on people. Just the other day I was meeting with a twelve year old who will be baptized in a few weeks. As I was going through the baptismal promises I realized I had to take the phrase, "Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin repent and return to the Lord?" and put it into terms appropriate for this person – terms that relate to her experience.

Christmas is a time when another word gets used a lot, a word that you may or may not know what it means. That word is "Incarnation." In some traditions Christmas is referred to as *The Feast of the Incarnation*, and our own prayer book refers to the twelve days of Christmas as the season of the Incarnation. But what exactly does it mean?

Probably the best description is in Philippians chapter 2 vv 5-7, "Though He was in the form of God, Christ Jesus did not consider equality with God as something to be held onto, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the form of a human." When we look at a manger scene, we see a tiny baby who is the king of kings. We also see God himself who became that baby. Think for a moment what it must have been like for God to give up everything to walk the earth as one of us. It would be like if you or I became an ant as an act of love towards the other ants.

But at the same time, that tiny baby means that God has come to be with us, and that's what Incarnation means – it means that God is with us. It happened through Jesus, it continues to happen through the Holy Spirit, it happens when we celebrate the Eucharist, and it certainly happens when two or three are gathered together in Christ's name (Matthew 18:20). This Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of Our Lord, let's also take a moment to think about how the world was affected by that tiny baby. Because of Him, we are never alone, because God is with us.

God's Peace,  
Fr. Conor+

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## *From Our Senior Warden*

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This is the day that the Lord hath made. It has been quite a pleasure reaching out to my St. Francis family these last twelve months. Even though this is my last letter to the Faithful Bell, I enjoyed the challenge and opportunity as your Senior warden. We have come a long way as a community on many levels. I have just tried to be honest and true to my experiences in my life, and gave my readers a lighter side of me that only a few have shared.

My father was a hardworking man who worked in many factories including rouge steel in Dearborn, Michigan. He retired from this plant at the age of 67. But his skills were so rare that the company wanted him to come back to work. He made many friends during his lifetime, and he knew how to be the life of the party. His friends were like brothers, and would do anything for him. In John 15:13, Jesus talks about a friend sacrificing for another friend. Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

One of my dad's proudest moments in my opinion is when he witnessed my promotion from first class petty officer, to chief petty officer in the US Navy. Sharon, and my dad, had the privilege to put my chief anchors on my uniform collar. My mother was also there to witness my transition to chief. My dad would call me chief for many years before I actually was promoted. He moved on to the larger life on February 1, 2000 while recovering from lymphoma cancer. This was the same year I retired from the Navy.

I am proud to say that I have friends that I met while in the Navy that I call my brothers. Our relationship goes back some twenty-seven years. And they are considered part of my family because of the respect we have showed each other for so long.

What I find so amazing is that not only do I have my immediate family that I love and adore, my in laws that I love very much, my church family, and some of my work family that I am with five days a week for over 300 days a year.

God has blessed me in so many ways I am forever grateful for the gifts he has given me. I hope that my messages were an inspiration to each and everyone.

May God continue to shine his light on us all!

Senior Warden

Orlando M Smith

# Christian Formation

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Dear Parish Family:

Christmas is approaching so quickly and as usual I find myself over whelmed with all that still needs to be done before the special day. However, each Sunday I have managed to give myself a bit of quiet time reflection while lighting my advent wreath at home. It feels like an oasis in the middle of the hot dessert of holiday chaos. This year it has helped me to try and escape even for a short period of time and truly reflect on our Savior's birth, death, resurrection and His coming again. I have finally realized how important this spiritual reflection is for my own Christian Formation. And as each Sunday of Advent passes, I look forward to the next with a renewed sense of excitement. Christmas is going to come regardless of whether my or your holiday tasks are all completed; we are going to celebrate His birthday, regardless. So join us for Sunday Christian Formation classes as we gather together and escape the Christmas craziness. Come and journey with us as we walk together to that stable and see the child of God born in human flesh.

Everyone is invited to come to the 4:00 service for the CF pageant, Oh Christmas Tree/ Chrismon Tree. This play will explore the history of the Chrismon tree and the meaning behind many of the ornaments decorating our St Francis Tree. There will be a reception following of Christmas cookies and punch. We would appreciate anyone willing to donate cookies for our celebration.

On behalf of all the Christian Formation Staff, I would like to wish each of you a blessed Christmas!

Bennett

## Evangelism

Please pray for our visitors:

Marinel Frau

Rafael Ruiz

Bianca Small



~ Bible Study ~

Footsteps Faith:

Tuesdays at 7:00 pm



## Outreach: Parish Food Closet

Yes, we still operate our food closet. We are maintained by referrals from Virginia Beach Social Services every five weeks, Monday through Thursday.

We are in need of food supplies:

Canned meats  
Boxed potatoes

Pasta  
Spaghetti sauce

Dry beans  
Boxed cornbread mix

Boxed biscuit mix

Canned fruits  
Peanut butter

Jelly

Cereal

Dry milk (small pkgs)

Boxed muffin mix

Pancake mix (complete)

Soups

Rice

Canned vegetables

We do not have facilities for anything but non-perishable items.

\*\*Bring items with you to church and place in basket in rear of Nave.



Thank you in advance, Doris Naugle & Elinor Ruth

## Capital Campaign News

**Capital Fund:** As of 9-10-2013 we will have \$17,983 in our Capital Fund after paying for the parking lot.

## LEM SCHEDULE



### December 1

8 am - Susan Golden

10:30 am - Clay Wise (Prayers)

Carol McCarthy (Readings)

### December 8

8 am - Bennett Card

10:30 am - Carol McCarthy (Prayers)

Terrence Cumberland (Readings)

### December 15

8 am - Susan Golden

10:30 am - John Ickes (Prayers)

Sarah Owens (Readings)

### December 22

8 am - Bennett Card

10:30 am - John Ickes (Prayers)

Sarah Owens (Readings)

### December 29

8 am - Bennett Card

10:30 am - need someone for (Prayers)

Terrence Cumberland (Readings)



## Altar Guild

December 21 - January 3

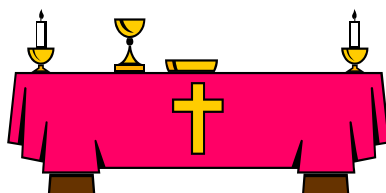
Eileen Anderson

January 4 - January 17

Jerry Hawkins

January 18 - January 31

Eileen Anderson



## Acolytes



### December 1

- Spencer- Crucifer
- Rylan- Gospel Bearer
- Brady- Torch Bearer
- Anna- Torch Bearer

### December 8

- Andre- Crucifer
- Rylan- Gospel Bearer
- Emerson- Torch Bearer
- Anna- Torch Bearer

### December 15

- Taylor- Crucifer
- Trevor- Gospel Bearer
- Azaria- Torch Bearer
- Mia- Torch Bearer

### December 22

- Emerson- Crucifer
- Brady- Gospel Bearer
- Spencer- Torch Bearer
- Anna- Torch Bearer

### December 29

- Andre- Crucifer
- Mia- Gospel Bearer
- Brooklyn- Torch Bearer
- Brady- Torch Bearer

## Building Usage

Need to reserve a room?  
Contact our Junior Warden,  
Chris Anderson, by email at  
[grillmaster4u@yahoo.com](mailto:grillmaster4u@yahoo.com) or by  
phone at (757)453-4020.



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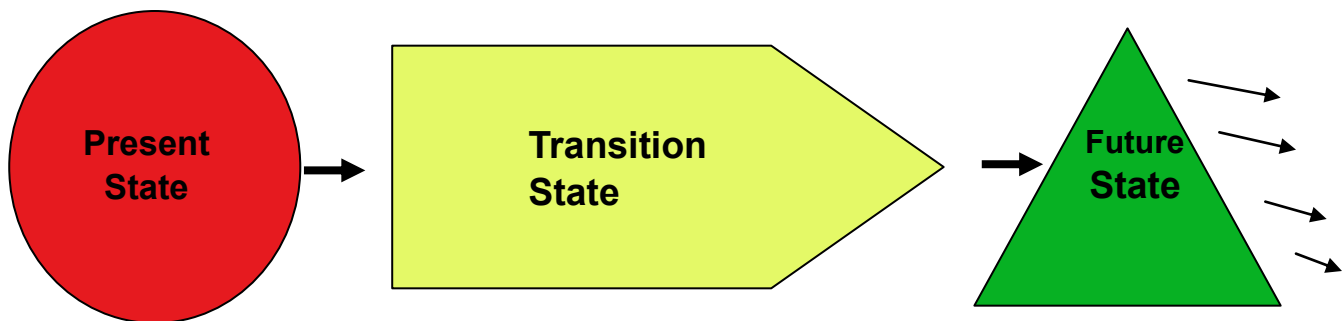
## St. Francis Episcopal Church Strategic Planning

All Episcopal churches should have a vision of where they think God wants them to take the church in the future. **“Where there is no vision, the people will perish”** Proverbs 29:18 (KJV). Churches year after year establish initiatives that may make sense for the short term but may be counterproductive to where they need to go for the long term. Therefore all church organizations need to have targets to move to with a road map/strategic plan of how to get there.

The 2013 St. Francis Vestry authorized the establishment of a long range strategic plan. It appointed a Strategic Planning Team to recommend what the future should look like for St. Francis Episcopal Church. The Team is made up of Father Conor Alexander, Susan Golden, Brad Hawkins, and Dosh Jackson, serving as team lead.

The Strategic Planning Team is using a well-recognized process to draft a strategic plan that will be presented to the current Vestry for deliberation and approval. The Vestry will then present the Plan to the Congregation for approval. The **2014 Annual Meeting** is the target date for approval by the Congregation.

### The Strategic Planning and Change Management Process



#### Preparing for Change

#### Managing Change

#### Reinforcing Change

The Strategic Planning Team (SPT) is using a three-step process to develop a Strategic Plan. It is looking at where St. Francis is now and key elements in the past. This is step one and is called the Present State. Step two is to determine the vision for the future. What is it that God wants St. Francis to be in the next five years and beyond? This step is called the Future State. Once it is determined where the church is going, then a strategic plan/road map is developed. We call this the Transition State and it is step three in the process. The SPT has analyzed St. Francis' present state and past milestones to determine a baseline for what is needed to move to St. Francis' vision for the future.

As a result of St. Francis' financial issues it is critical that the Church have a plan to move to a different way of conducting the Church's business. Developing this strategic plan is very timely in helping solve our financial problems.

We will be reporting on progress of the SPT in future issues of the "The Faithful Bell".

Dosh Jackson, Vestry Finance

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## Vestry Meeting—November 20, 2013

### Summary of Action

#### Finance Update—Dosh Jackson/Roxanne Taylor:

Income covered expenses for the second month in a row, and the deficit was lowered. We are not out of the woods, but progress was made due to flea market proceeds, Tsu Fullwood's generous offer to transfer \$2,000 from the Flower Guild to the General Fund, people catching up on summer pledges, and appeals at services so that parishioners understand the situation.

Any expenditures that can be delayed until after New Year's should be. Next year's budget will be based on pledges received.

Refinancing of mortgage: Dosh just got word that St. Francis has been approved for a refinancing loan through Old Pointe Bank. There is still work to do to complete the process, including changing our banking relationship from Bank of America.

Strategic Plan—Dosh Jackson: The team of Brad Hawkins, Susan Golden, Fr. Conor, and Dosh continues to work on the Strategic Plan.

Audit—Roxanne Taylor: The required audit has been completed by Linda Dawson, who commended the job that Roxanne is doing. Most of the recommendations are minor and easy to correct. Groups with accounts that disburse funds need to establish procedures in group/fund charters and to keep meeting minutes, as ECW already does. Counters need to rotate yearly. The terminology and numbering in financial reports will follow the diocesan manual guidelines. The treasurer needs assistance; Janice, the temporary secretary, will now reconcile.

Junior Warden—Chris Anderson: The electrician/instructor from the Virginia Beach Technical and Career Education Center has offered to do electrical work for only the cost of materials; they have worked with other churches, with the school covering liability. The Vestry approved pursuing this option.

Stewardship—Ken Clarke: Pledges are coming in steadily.

Social—Susan Clever: Susan distributed samples of Invitation Cards and the explanation sheet. They will be distributed this Sunday to help people invite others to join us in worship and knowing Christ. Susan was thanked for her efforts.

Communications—Robert Savage: The new website is up. If you have anything to add or change, send it to Robert or to [stfrancisvbwebsite@gmail.com](mailto:stfrancisvbwebsite@gmail.com).

Christian Formation—Ron Simmons: Bennett is seeking ideas for encouraging parishioners to attend Sunday school classes. The Christmas Eve pageant will be "O Chrismon (Christ Monograms) Tree", and the Angel Choir will sing.

Evangelism—Suzanne Yatsko: Another class to train Lay Eucharistic Visitors will be held early in 2014.

Respectfully submitted, Lynn Kennedy, Registrar





# St. Francis Episcopal Church Financial Update

*As of November 30, 2013*



	Actual	Budget YTD	Difference
<b>Total Contributions</b>	131,472.22	125,695.40	5,778.82
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	141,714.97	146,416.55	(4,701.58)
<b>Net Income</b>	(10,242.75)	(20,723.15)	

*Notes: 1 Giving has been picking up and we have made progress on our deficit.*

*2 Please stay current on your pledging, and give an extra \$8/week to help balance the budget.*



## Grass Cutters

Will resume in April.



## Vestry Lock-Up

February 2

Robert Savage

February 9

Kenrick Clark

February 16

Ronald Simmons

February 23

Dosh Jackson

## Altar Flowers

### February 2

The flowers on the Altar are given in thanksgiving for our sons Neal and Drew on their birthdays, Lynn and Kevin Kennedy.

### February 9

The flowers on the Altar are given

- by Bennett Card in remembrance of his mother, Mae Jones Card
- in honor of Christopher Miller.

### February 16

The flowers on the Altar are given in honor of Amelia & Ashley Hupp and by Vonia & John Ickes in honor of Rebecca's birthday and to the Glory of God.

### February 23

The flowers on the Altar are given to the Glory of God by Brad & Jerry Hawkins in honor of their 44th Wedding Anniversary!

